



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

John J. Leahy
Mayor and Chairperson

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

Tel: (978) 674-4324
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Andre P. Descoteaux
Vice-Chairperson

Wednesday, November 17, 2021
City Hall – Council Chamber
5:15 p.m.

Hilary Clark
Michael Dillon Jr.
Jackie Doherty
Dominik Lay
Connie A. Martin

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Ms. Martin, Mr. Descoteaux and Ms. Doherty
School Committee Members Present:	Mayor Leahy, Ms. Clark and Mr. Lay
School Department Personnel Present:	Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer
City of Lowell Personnel Present:	Attorney O'Connor, City Solicitor

Chairperson Martin called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. **Contract Review**
2. **Processing Concerns**

City Solicitor O'Connor addressed the Subcommittee and stated that her intent was to clear up what been brought forward by the school administration regarding contract review. Solicitor O'Connor stated that her office received two (2) communications on October 19th regarding the processing of contracts as well as an update on ten (10) specific contracts. She stated that the Law Department annually reviews approximately 400 contracts from departments throughout the city. She stated that since the pandemic, the number of contracts and amendments process

has increased significantly. She stated that given the volume on contracts to be reviewed, it is imperative that all the information be accurate.

Ms. Turner stated that she would like to meet bi-weekly to avoid any future issues with the contracts.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that it's a good suggestion as the Law Department has standing meetings with other City Departments and is happy to add the School Department to that list.

Ms. Turner stated that she believes they're on the same page and meeting bi-weekly will be great.

Mr. Descoteaux asked if a handbook was available for the district that explains the contract process.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that there is no handbook and that the process is to follow MGL. 30B.

Ms. Doherty stated that she was interested in the translation contract and that the unfortunate delay had a huge impact and asked if the Law Department should train someone.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that she thinks the meetings will be very helpful and is happy to meet regularly.

Ms. Martin asked if the CFO needs to sign it

Solicitor O'Connor stated it depends on the contract.

Ms. Turner asked if we could move forward on the Permission to Enter threshold.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that it seems logical, but that's not always the case and that you can run into issues.

Ms. Clark stated that we should be using docu-sign or some other electronic services/devices.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that it's not a broken system and she is happy to meet. She stated that most contracts are fairly standard and that she and the Law Department are happy to do whatever they can to help.

Ms. Doherty asked about the NRT amended contract and stated that Solicitor O'Connor had advised against it and Ms. Doherty stated that she had concerns as well, but didn't know the Solicitor had advised against it.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that the we have protective contract language and the amendment in question has not been dismissed.

Ms. Doherty stated she believes its communication issues.

Ms. Martin asked who the official conduit is...the Mayor or a certain Subcommittees.

Solicitor O'Connor stated that its working with our counterparts in Central office.

Ms. Doherty stated that there have been a number of conversations regarding the Chiefs' contracts and that the Committee has never heard back from Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Solicitor O'Connor stated that it's not a new issue and it's a matter of law. She stated the only authorized positions to hold contracts are Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Principals and Coaches. She stated that beyond that you start to deviate from Massachusetts General Law. She stated that she spoke with the Attorney from MASC and he was unfamiliar with the Chief title and advised to stay within Massachusetts General Law. She stated that it is her recommendation as well to comply with Massachusetts General Law. She stated that when titles change it raises issues around jurisdiction and if the Committee have jurisdiction over these positions as well as the requirements with the positions.

**Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to adjourn at 6:29 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 3 yeas
APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Billie Jo Turner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Billie Jo Turner, Chief Financial Officer
for Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent and
Secretary, Lowell School Committee

BJT/mes